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Lebanon: The Growing Strength of the Palestinians

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An Intelligence Assessment

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*NESA 87-10056
December 1987*

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An Intelligence Assessment

This paper was prepared by [redacted]
Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis. It
was coordinated with the Directorate of
Operations [redacted]

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Comments and queries are welcome and may be
directed to the Chief, Arab-Israeli Division, NESA,
[redacted]

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Lebanon: The Growing Strength of the Palestinians

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Key Judgments

*Information available
as of 1 December 1987
was used in this report.*

The Palestinians are rapidly rebuilding their power base in Lebanon, further complicating efforts to achieve Lebanese national reconciliation and stability along Israel's northern border. The Palestinian fighters—now perhaps over 10,000—have made great strides toward rebuilding their military, intelligence, and political infrastructure. They are gaining a foothold in the south and are accelerating their attacks on Israeli forces and the Israeli-backed Army of South Lebanon in the security zone. [REDACTED]

The growing strength of the Palestinian guerrillas in Lebanon is highlighted by their de facto takeover in late 1986 of Sidon, the country's third-largest city. The presence of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in the Sidon area, in the midst of several contending militias, is leading to increased Palestinian entanglement in Lebanese militia politics.¹ The PLO's traditional tactic of playing off rival militias adds to the differences among Lebanon's factions. [REDACTED]

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Palestinian fighters are returning to Lebanon by sea, primarily through Sidon, but also through the Druze-held port of Khaldah and the Christian port of Juniyah. The PLO infiltration has been assisted by tactical alliances with Lebanese factions, including the pro-Iranian Shia fundamentalist Hizballah and the Palestinians' traditional Christian enemies. Most of Lebanon's militias are aiding the return of the Palestinians in return for cash and other incentives. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] The priority the PLO assigns to Lebanon is reflected in the fact that the PLO is spending an estimated \$135 million annually on its activities in Lebanon. [REDACTED]

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Israel is delaying and disrupting the regrouping of Palestinian fighters by systematically raiding and destroying their command and control centers. Israeli airstrikes against Palestinian targets will not dislodge the PLO fighters from their strongholds but are likely to impede their operations. The Palestinians are likely to react to Israeli escalation by increasing their attacks—probably in coordination with Lebanese leftist and fundamentalist militants. [REDACTED]

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¹ Throughout this paper PLO is used to refer to Palestinian factions—principally Fatah—that accept the leadership of PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat, as opposed to the pro-Syrian groups belonging to the Palestine National Salvation Front. [REDACTED]

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Damascus is bent on controlling Palestinian activities in Lebanon, but it is unlikely to accomplish its goal. Syria's unwillingness to project direct military force in South Lebanon, for fear of provoking Israel, is aiding the reemergence of Arafat's power base there. The unreliability of Syria's Lebanese allies in opposing the PLO may force Damascus to confront Arafat more directly in the Beirut area and Sidon. Open conflict with the PLO, however, would be opposed by the Soviet Union, by Iran and Libya—Damascus's closest regional allies—and by moderate Gulf states such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. []

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In the event of a Syrian-PLO reconciliation—perhaps following Syrian President Assad's death or in the unlikely event he decides to embrace Arafat—the prospects for the PLO in Lebanon would dramatically improve. Arafat would undoubtedly gain extensively from the reopening of a weapons supply line through Syria. []

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The brightest prospect for further PLO conquests is around Sidon. The prospects for an expansion of Palestinian power in the south will depend greatly on the Syrian and Israeli reaction. For different reasons, neither country wants the PLO to become dominant in the south, but each will resist aggressive initiatives by the other. The possibility of a Palestinian resurgence in Beirut is a more distant prospect. Palestinian fighters in the Lebanese capital are surrounded by Syrian forces and Amal militiamen, and they have little chance of operating outside the camps. []

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Increased Hizballah ties to Palestinians—including Abu Nidal—will probably contribute to an increase in coordinated attacks against Israel's northern border. It could also lead to cooperation in terrorism against Western interests in Europe, although PLO-Hizballah cooperation, at least in the near term, will probably remain localized in Lebanon. []

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US efforts to mediate the Lebanese conflict and to promote movement toward peace in the Middle East are further complicated by the reemergence of an armed Palestinian presence in Lebanon. The resurrection of Palestinian influence in Lebanon adds to the country's thorny social and political problems and will make a negotiated settlement in Lebanon more difficult. Moreover, escalation of hostilities, particularly in the south, runs the risk of triggering open conflict between Israel and Syria. []

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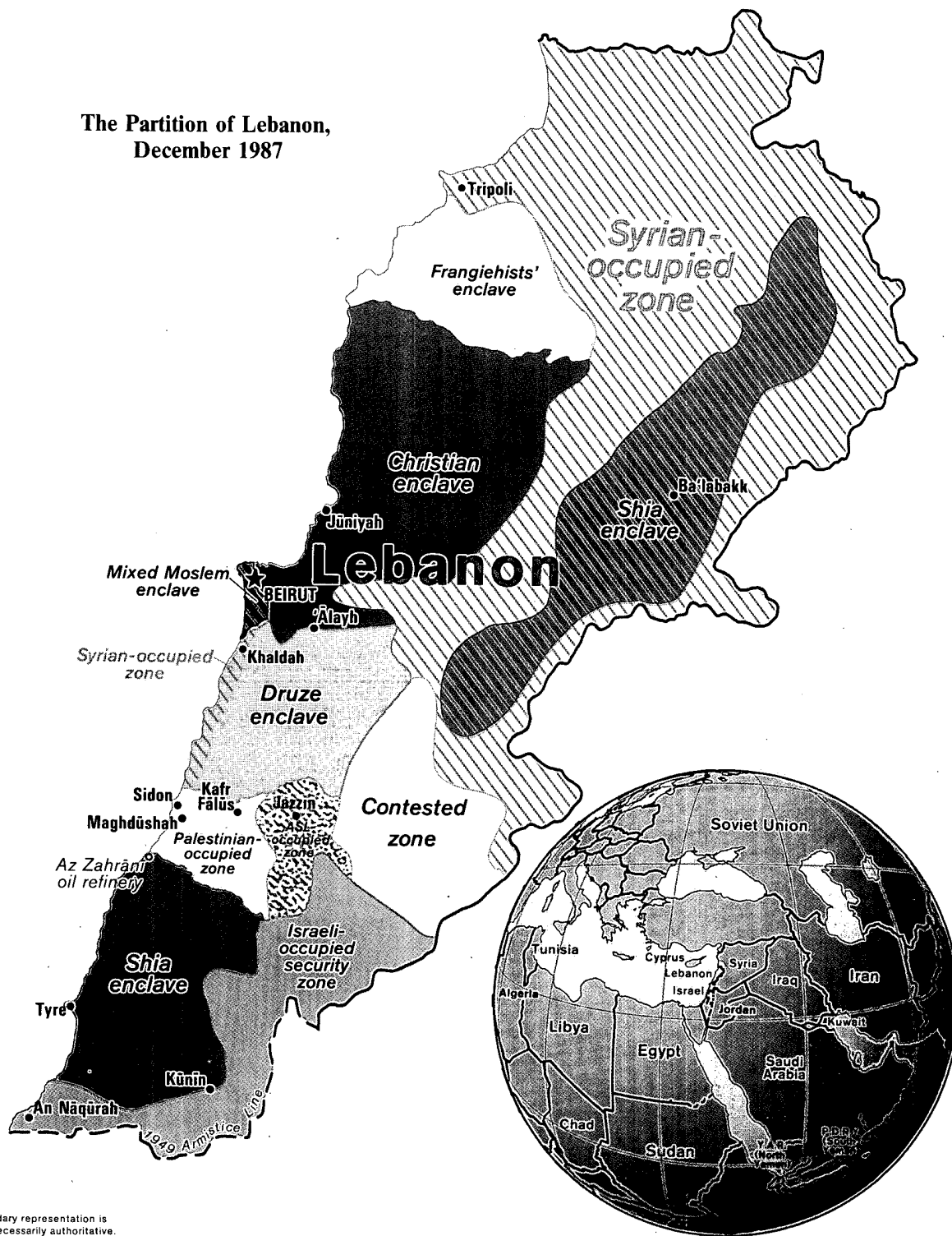
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Figure 1



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Lebanon: The Growing Strength of the Palestinians

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The Palestinian guerrillas have been making a major comeback in Lebanon since their expulsion by Israel in 1982 and by Syria in 1983. The rise of Palestinian fortunes is aided by the continuing decline of the authority of the Lebanese Government, Israeli-Syrian hostility, and the ability of the Palestinians to successfully align themselves with Lebanese sectarian and ideological factions.

The Palestinians have been reorganizing and rebuilding their political and military organizational network in Lebanon since 1982. We judge that the number of Palestinian civilians in Lebanon totals around 400,000. Although several thousand Palestinian fighters were expelled by Israel and by Syria, several thousand never left the country. Hundreds of pro-Arafat loyalists went underground in Beirut and Tripoli, and pro-Syrian Palestinians gathered in the Al Biqa' (Bekaa Valley) under Damascus's auspices to form the Palestine National Salvation Front. The Front emerged as a key challenger to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) under Arafat's leadership in Lebanon after 1982.

The PLO's revival has been opposed by Syria and its most important ally in Lebanon—the Shia Muslim Amal militia. Since 1984 Amal and the Palestinians have engaged in sporadic fighting—called the camps war because it is a struggle for control of the refugee camps. Some 2,500 soldiers and civilians have died in these battles.

Revival in Sidon

Fatah and other pro-Arafat Palestinian factions have succeeded in taking control of Sidon, Lebanon's third-largest city, and areas around it with the help of the Lebanese Sunni militia of Mustafa Sa'd. Pro-Arafat groups control several hills adjacent to the refugee camps of 'Ayn al Hulwah and Al Miyah wa Miyah, where over 100,000 Palestinians live. The success of the PLO fighters in wresting control of the strategic coastal town of Maghdushah from Amal militiamen

Groups Within the Palestine Liberation Organization

	Leader	Headquarters	Size
Fatah loyalists	Yasir Arafat	Tunis	6,000-8,000 scattered
Arab Liberation Front (ALF)	Abd al-Rahim Ahmad	Baghdad	300-500 in Iraq
Front for the Liberation of Palestine (FLP) ^a	Muhammad Abbas (Abu Abbas)	Tunis	50-100
	Ta'lat Yaqub	Damascus	About 150
Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP)	Nayif Hawatmah	Damascus	1,200-2,000 scattered
Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)	George Habbash	Damascus	1,500-2,000 scattered
Palestine Communist Party (PCP)	Sulayman Najjab	Damascus	Unknown, small
Palestine National Salvation Front (Pro-Syrian)			
PFLP-General Command (PFLP-GC)	Ahmad Jabril	Damascus	800-1,000 mostly in Lebanon and Syria
Sa'iqa	Issam al-Qadi	Damascus	500-1,000
Popular Struggle Front (PSF)	Samir Ghawshah	Probably Damascus	200-300 scattered
Front for the Liberation of Palestine (FLP) ^a	Abd al-Fatah Ghanim	Damascus	About 150
Fatah rebels	Sa'id Muragha (Abu Musa)	Damascus	500, mostly Syria and Lebanon
Pro-Jordanian			
Fatah Corrective Movement	Atallah Atallah (Abu Za'im)	Amman	About 150

^a Also known as the Palestine Liberation Front (PLF). At the April meeting of the Palestine National Council in Algiers, the Abu Abbas and Ta'lat Yaqub factions of the FLP agreed to hold a reunification conference within three months, but none has occurred.

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Figure 2
Palestinian Refugee Camps in Lebanon



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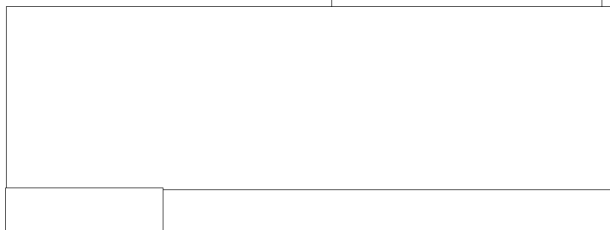
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Figure 3. Palestinian fighters celebrate their victory over Amal in Maghdushah in December 1986. [redacted]



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in December 1986 split Amal's headquarters in Beirut from its cadres in the south. [redacted]



The Palestinians and their Lebanese Sunni allies have been attempting to occupy Jazzin—so far unsuccessfully—to link it to the Sidon area. Jazzin is the largest Christian town in the south and is controlled by the Israeli-backed Army of South Lebanon although it lies outside Israel's security zone in Lebanon. The PLO controls a string of former Christian villages stretching from the hills northeast of Sidon to the slopes of Jazzin, and it is engaged in almost daily artillery and small-arms skirmishes with the Army of South Lebanon. The presence of the Army of South Lebanon in Jazzin and the town's isolation from the Israeli security zone make it a tempting target for a joint Hizballah, Palestinian, and Lebanese Sunni offensive. [redacted]

The Palestinian stronghold in Sidon—similar to other sectarian enclaves—is being harassed by Israel, which is determined to curtail Palestinian activities north of the Israeli-controlled security zone. The Sidon stronghold is much smaller than "Fatahland," the pre-1982 Palestinian stronghold north of the Israeli-Lebanese border. The concentration of Palestinian fighters in Sidon makes them more vulnerable to Israeli strikes. A major Israeli air raid on 5 September 1987 symbolized Israel's resolve to disrupt Palestinian positions in the Sidon area. The raid resulted in the death of over 65 Palestinians, 20 of whom were Abu Nidal fighters and the rest civilians, according to press reports. [redacted]

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The Palestinians are meeting the Israeli threat by building additional bases elsewhere in Lebanon. Some pro-Syrian Palestinians and other neutral groups like the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC), Abu Nidal, and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) have bases north of Ash Shuf (Shuf)

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Figure 4. Victims of the Israeli air raid on 'Ayn al Hulwah, September 1987



Figure 5. Palestinian women leave the besieged camp of Ar Rashidiyah near Tyre to bring in food

near 'Alyah, in Syrian-controlled areas in the Bekaa Valley, and in northern Lebanon near Tripoli. The 'Alyah bases have been used to shell Amal positions around the besieged Palestinian camps in West Beirut and are credited by Amal officials with preventing Amal from gaining the upper hand in the camps war there. The Palestinian bases in the Bekaa and in northern Lebanon are important training and communications facilities for Palestinians and their allies.

Arafat's Motives

The shattering of the PLO presence in Lebanon by Israel in 1982—followed by Syria's attack on the PLO in late 1983—left the organization militarily impotent and politically demoralized. The loss of Lebanon robbed the Palestinian guerrillas of their most important base for operations against Israel.

Palestinian fighters who had been accustomed to operating freely inside Lebanon found themselves severely constrained by their new hosts in Syria, Algeria, Tunisia, Sudan, Libya, North Yemen, South Yemen, and Iraq, necessitating a return to Lebanon.

Other factors have contributed to the return of an organized Palestinian movement to Lebanon:

- The massacre of an estimated 900 to 1,500 civilians at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Beirut in September 1982 by the Israeli-supported Christian Lebanese Forces militia added urgency to the PLO's desire to return its fighters to Lebanon. The majority of Palestinian civilians were subjected to daily harassment from rival Lebanese militias and from Israel.

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Figure 6. Palestinians huddled in an underground bunker during Amal's siege of the camps.



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- Strong familial ties strengthened the fighters' yearning to go back. A Palestinian scholar says the deaths of several thousand Palestinian guerrillas between 1975 and 1982 and the continuing displacement and harassment of several hundred thousand Palestinian civilians in Lebanon reinforced in the minds of the fighters the need to avenge the suffering of their people.
- The outbreak of the camps war in the spring of 1985 between Syrian-backed Lebanese Shia Amal militiamen and Palestinian guerrillas and the subsequent Israeli attack on the PLO headquarters in Tunis in October 1985 encouraged the Palestinians to speed up efforts to end their exile from Lebanon.

We believe that most of the Palestinian fighters who moved to North Yemen, Iraq, and other Arab countries in the wake of the Israeli invasion have returned to Lebanon.

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Rate of Return and Infiltration Routes

The PLO is slowly rebuilding its strength but has not yet reached its pre-1982 invasion level of 15,000 to 20,000 fighters. Before 1982 it controlled virtually all of South Lebanon, much of West Beirut, and the refugee camps around Tripoli in the north.

Pro-Arafat loyalists constitute the largest number of recent Palestinian infiltrators into Lebanon. until the reentry of Syrian troops into West Beirut last February, infiltration of Arafat loyalists via Cyprus through Beirut

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Figure 7. The exit of the Palestinian fighters in 1982. Caption says the Palestinians have returned.



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International Airport, through the illegal Druze-held port at Khaldah, and through the Sunni-controlled port of Sidon had risen dramatically. The Israelis say that, although PLO infiltration via Beirut Airport has been drastically reduced since the Syrian intervention, it has not ceased. Pro-Arafat Lebanese operatives and security officials at the airport and at Khaldah are still facilitating the entry of pro-Arafat guerrillas, but the majority are being routed through Sidon. According to US State Department officials, Palestinian weapons smuggling in incoming cargo and baggage at Beirut Airport is still widespread.

Some pro-Syrian members of the Palestine National Salvation Front who regularly travel to Lebanon from Syria are now taking the same routes as Arafat's supporters. this shift

probably was compelled by Syrian restraints on its Palestinian allies' movements in recent months.



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Weapons Acquisition

The PLO is amassing large amounts of light weapons, mostly of Soviet and East European manufacture, in contrast to its emphasis on heavy weapons before 1982. Some communications and signal equipment is being purchased on the open market from Western

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The Mushrooming of Abu Nidal

Abu Nidal, the leader of the Fatah Revolutionary Council, is making a major effort to gain strength in Lebanon. [] the Abu Nidal militia has grown dramatically there in the past year and has been deeply involved in the camps war. Although relatively few in number (about 500) compared to Fatah, we believe that the Abu Nidal organization is a force to be reckoned with because its radical image attracts young, disillusioned Palestinians. The organization is evolving into a full-fledged political entity in Lebanon. []

Abu Nidal is increasing his cooperation with the Iranian Revolutionary Guard contingent stationed in Lebanon. []

[] Abu Nidal has maintained a liaison relationship with the Revolutionary Guard in Ba'labbakk since 1986. The Revolutionary Guard is also providing funds and logistic help to Abu Nidal fighters operating in South Lebanon. Some of these funds were distributed by Abu Nidal to his Palestinian constituency in the refugee camps north of Tripoli. []

We believe that the Abu Nidal organization is developing a credible force in Lebanon despite the closure of its offices in Damascus. Abu Nidal is actively recruiting disaffected Palestinians in Syrian-controlled areas and appears to be gaining strength and momentum at the expense of other Palestinian groups. []

sources. Palestinian officials in Cyprus are encouraging their fighters in Lebanon to buy Portuguese artillery. The occasional interdiction of weapons and personnel destined for Palestinian camps in the south by the Israeli navy is forcing PLO field commanders to buy additional large quantities of weapons and ammunition from local dealers. Local purchases include machineguns, Soviet-made Kalashnikov rifles, RPG launchers, handgrenades, mortars, and Katyusha rockets. []

The Palestinians are also buying light weapons from several Lebanese factions. [] the PLO purchases weapons from the Druze, the Christians, the Sunni Muslims, Hizballah, and even from its enemy Amal. []

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Despite these purchases, we believe that the PLO has not recovered from the loss of large quantities of heavy weapons captured by the Israelis during the 1982 invasion. For example, the Palestinians have not replenished their supplies of tanks and armored personnel carriers, which numbered some 50 to 100 mostly obsolescent Soviet-type T-34 tanks and about 50 armored personnel carriers. The Palestinians' main source of heavy weapons has been Syria, but, since the breakdown of Syrian-PLO relations in 1983, the Palestinians have been unable to acquire such weapons from Damascus. []

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[] although the PLO in Lebanon has received no heavy weapons from the Soviet Union recently, their Druze allies have. The Druze have about 35 T-55 tanks, and we believe that, in light of the Druze financial crisis in recent months, they might lease a limited number of tanks to the PLO in return for cash. []

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Finances

We believe that the PLO's ability to purchase weaponry and buy influence among the Lebanese militias is aided by the sound financial standing of the organization in Lebanon, although the effort is causing a heavy financial drain on the PLO worldwide. We estimate that 60 to 75 percent of the PLO's budget is spent in Lebanon, which amounts to about \$135 million annually. The PLO made several lucrative investments in the Lebanese economy during the 1970s and continues to draw income from these investments to supplement declining financial support from Arab sources. Arab patrons including Libya are another source of money. []

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[redacted]

[redacted] Arafat approves all budgets and expenditures for the camps in Lebanon, which include trusts for families of dead fighters, scholarships, medical and social services, and land and housing purchases. [redacted]

We judge that the PLO is spending large sums of money (perhaps as much as \$80-90 million so far) on the camps war. Arafat is outbidding his Palestinian opponents inside the camps by buying the support of their fighters. [redacted] many fighters from the pro-Syrian Palestine National Salvation Front are defecting to Arafat's side because of higher pay. Fatah fighters in Lebanon are paid \$100 per month, and their commanders receive \$700, almost double the salaries of other Palestinian factions. [redacted]

Palestinian Ties to Lebanese Factions

We believe that Arafat is developing ties to several Lebanese factions as leverage against Syria and its Lebanese ally, Amal. Declining financial resources both locally and regionally are forcing Lebanon's factions—including the Christians—to turn to the PLO for help. PLO ties to Lebanese factions have proved to be fragile in the past, however, because they have been based on short-term political and monetary rewards rather than on common ideology. We judge that Arafat must continue to nurture these ties if he is to succeed in consolidating his power base in Lebanon. [redacted]

Ties to the Christians

Lebanese Christian animosity toward Syria and Amal is strengthening Christian-PLO ties. The Christians view the Palestinian presence in Lebanon as a lever against Syria. [redacted]

Examples of Recent PLO Involvement in Lebanese Fighting

1983 War of the Mountain. Palestinian fighters join Druze fighters in bitter fighting against the Christian Lebanese Forces militia. Alliance leads to expulsion of Christian inhabitants from the northern and southern Shuf areas, especially in the Iqlim al Kharrub region. Palestinian fighters have remained in the Iqlim ever since. [redacted]

1985 War of Tripoli. PLO fighters join with Islamic fundamentalists of the Islamic Unification Movement against the pro-Syrian Arab Democratic Party, the Syrian-backed Palestine National Salvation Front, and splinter groups belonging to the Lebanese Communist Party and the Syrian Social National Party. Clashes lead to expulsion of pro-Arafat loyalists from Tripoli and an end to the brief Islamic fundamentalist enclave in the city. [redacted]

1985 War of the Flag. Palestinian fighters in Beirut join forces with the Druze against Amal in a bid to drive Amal from its turf in West Beirut. Clashes result in a standoff. Syria interferes to end the clashes by putting heavy pressure on Druze chieftain Walid Junblatt to order a halt to the fighting. [redacted]

1987 War of the Allies. Palestinian fighters join the Druze and other leftist forces in West Beirut in the most recent bid to destroy the Amal stronghold there. The Palestinian-Druze alliance had come close to achieving its stated objective when Syrian troops entered West Beirut on Amal's behalf on 22 February. [redacted]

Gemayel met PLO officials during his visit to the UN General Assembly in September 1987, according to the Christian Lebanese press. [redacted]

The Christian Lebanese Forces militia is also helping PLO fighters to return to Lebanon through its port at Juniyah. [redacted] he Palestinians arrive on ferryboats from Cyprus. Israeli gunboats in January 1987 briefly raided the ferries and

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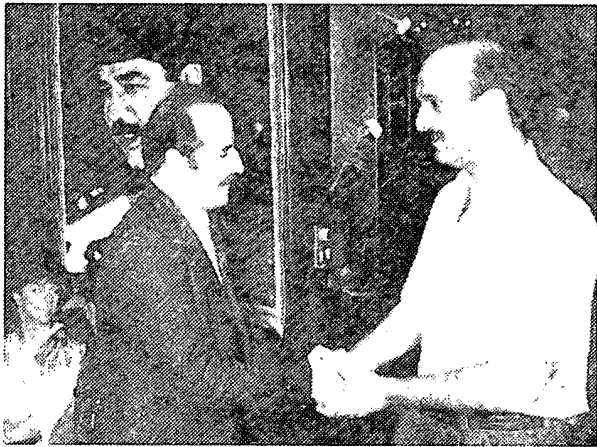


Figure 8. Christian militia commander Samir Ja'ja attends a reception of the Iraqi Embassy commemorating Iraq's Revolution Day last 14 July.

discovered armed Palestinian fighters. We believe that infiltration is still taking place, albeit at a much reduced rate as a result of Israeli pressure on Lebanese Forces commander Samir Ja'ja.

Iraq is a key player in the Lebanese Forces-PLO rapprochement. The Christians are aligning themselves with Iraq, one of Arafat's major backers and Syria's foe, in an attempt to isolate Syria, to improve their bargaining position vis-a-vis Damascus, and, to improve the Christian-Palestinian dialogue.

According to the US Embassy in Beirut, Dany Chamoun, son of deceased former President Camille Chamoun, was instrumental in arranging a \$12 million arms shipment to the Lebanese Forces from Iraq last winter. Chamoun told US Embassy officials that he has recently negotiated a second deal for \$8 million.

Ties to the Druze

The Druze maintain cordial relations with the PLO despite increasing pressure from Syria to end this cooperation. the Druze-held port of Khaldah has been the point of entry for

hundreds of Palestinian fighters. In return, the Druze extract cash and weapons from the Palestinians. The posting of Syrian soldiers in the vicinity of Khaldah since last February has reduced the Palestinian infiltration there, although weapons for the PLO continue to transit this port. The Druze have also been helping the PLO in the camps war by refusing to side with Amal.

The US Embassy in Beirut states that Damascus has repeatedly warned Druze leader Walid Junblatt against helping Arafat loyalists, but to no avail. Junblatt views his special relationship with Arafat as a broad ideological Pan-Arab alliance and a hedge against possible threats from Damascus. Junblatt's father Kamal was assassinated by Syrian agents in 1977 for refusing to abandon his alliance with the Palestinians. Junblatt placates the Syrians by occasionally appearing to yield to their pressure, but he remains the PLO's most reliable, albeit discreet, ally.

Ties to Hizballah

We believe that Yasir Arafat is forging a close tactical alliance with the Iranian-supported Hizballah to weaken both Syria and Amal. Hizballah has assisted the return of pro-Arafat Fatah fighters to Lebanon, and Fatah has reciprocated by providing Hizballah with weapons and money. As of July 1987, Arafat was planning to increase aid to Hizballah, which had been declining as a result of the financial strain being experienced by the PLO. PLO financial support for selected Hizballah leaders began in 1985. Many Hizballah leaders began their careers as Fatah militants before the Israeli invasion in 1982.

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[redacted]
Arafat and his top aides maintain personal ties to selected Hizballah officials. [redacted]
[redacted]

[redacted] the PLO has given weapons to Hizballah in southern Lebanon, and Palestinian fighters are joining forces with Hizballah to increase their attacks on the Israel Defense Forces and their Army of South Lebanon surrogates. Sources of the US Embassy in Tel Aviv state that the Israelis believe that a major Hizballah ambush of an Israeli patrol unit near Kunin, just outside the security zone, in February 1986 could not have been accomplished without Palestinian support. The ambush led to the killing of two Israeli soldiers and the capture of two others. [redacted]

Israeli forces suffered their heaviest casualties since their withdrawal in June 1985 in a clash with pro-Syrian Palestinian guerrillas on 25 November 1987 when six Israeli soldiers were killed by a PFLP-GC commando who used a hang glider to enter northern Israel. On 16 September 1987 three Israeli soldiers were killed and several wounded in a clash with pro-Syrian and Lebanese guerrillas who were attempting to infiltrate into Israel through the security zone. The infiltration attempt came only 10 days after an Israeli raid on Palestinian targets in Sidon that resulted in numerous deaths and injuries. [redacted]

Ties to Sunni Moderates

Palestinian ties have always been strongest to the Sunni Muslims. The strongest link between the Palestinians and the Sunnis is in Sidon under the auspices of Mustafa Sa'd, leader of the Popular Nasirite Organization. Sa'd is turning a blind eye to the growing influence and strength of Arafat loyalists in his city in return for monetary and political rewards.



Figure 9. Sunni militia leader Mustafa Sa'd, the PLO's staunchest supporter in Sidon. [redacted]

The Palestinians—whose fighters are the backbone of Sa'd's political power—are backing Sa'd in his bid to become Sidon's undisputed Lebanese warlord. [redacted]

[redacted] Sa'd reluctantly joined the Syrian-sponsored Unity and Liberation Front against Arafat in July, but he remains a staunch Arafat supporter. [redacted]

We believe that Israeli air and ground attacks on the Palestinian camps around Sidon are cementing relations between the PLO and Sa'd's militia and are likely to lead to more joint operations against the Israeli-backed Army of South Lebanon, at least in the Jazzin area. PLO-Popular Nasirite forces are already dug in at Kafr Falus, a town only 17 kilometers west

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Figure 10. Arafat exiting Tripoli in 1983 following his expulsion by Syrian troops.



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of Jazzin, and are locked into an intermittent shelling duel with the Army of South Lebanon. The PLO and the Popular Nasirites improved the coordination of their activities around Sidon following a night raid on the town by Israeli commandos last July. Several Popular Nasirite militiamen were killed by the Israelis, who mistook them for Palestinian fighters.

We judge that the rapid decline of traditional Sunni influence elsewhere in Lebanon since 1982 is forcing Sunni politicians to strengthen their ties to the PLO to reduce their vulnerability to rival sectarian groups. The PLO has established ties to several traditional Sunni leaders and to the Sunni militias mainly to counter Shia influence in Lebanon. The highest ranking Sunni religious leader, the Grand Mufti Hassan Khaled, has repeatedly rejected Amal and Syrian

demands to disarm the Palestinians. The PLO retains contacts with the largest—but weak—Sunni militia in Beirut, Murabitun.

Ties to Sunni Fundamentalists

Arafat is relying increasingly on Lebanese Sunni fundamentalist groups such as the Tripoli-based Islamic Unification Movement for help against Syria. He regularly funds Islamic Unification Movement activities, and Shaykh Sa'id Sha'ban, the head of the Movement, maintains a personal relationship with the PLO chief. Before the expulsion of the PLO from Tripoli in 1983 and again in 1986 by Syria and its surrogate Lebanese militias, the Islamic Unification Movement succeeded in temporarily establishing a Sunni fundamentalist stronghold in Tripoli with Arafat's assistance. A large cache of PLO weapons was

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put at Sha'ban's disposal on the eve of Arafat's departure from the city in 1983. In December 1986, Arafat urged Islamic Unification Movement fighters to rise against the Syrians to distract Syrian forces from their increasing harassment of the Palestinian camps in Beirut and South Lebanon. The bloody uprising, led by one of Sha'ban's aides, Hashem Minqarah, was crushed by the Syrians. []

[] Arafat is continuing his financial assistance to the Islamic Unification Movement and is also funding members of the anti-Syrian Muslim Brotherhood hiding in Lebanon. []

Obstacles to Further Palestinian Growth

Israeli Interdiction

We believe Israel's active opposition to the Palestinians' return to Lebanon will prevent the reestablishment of the Palestinian power base as it existed before 1982. [] although the Palestinians are rebuilding their military organizations—especially their battalions—to the pre-1982 levels, they cannot find enough trained personnel to fill them. Israel is delaying and disrupting the regrouping of Palestinian fighters by systematically raiding and destroying their command and control centers. The Israelis have also stepped up interdiction of fighters returning by sea. Neither action, however, is halting the gradual return of Palestinian fighters to southern Lebanon. []

Israel's navy has maintained a strong presence off the southern Lebanese coast since Israel withdrew most of its troops from Lebanon in 1985. The Israelis aim to thwart seaborne guerrilla attacks, stem Palestinian reinfiltration into southern Lebanon, and interrupt the flow of weaponry to militias there. Israeli patrol boats conduct around-the-clock operations, acting in concert with land-based radar and observation posts, Israeli and Army of South Lebanon troops patrolling coastal roads, and maritime patrol aircraft flying daily missions over Lebanese waters. Israeli patrol craft check most ships entering or leaving the area. Each ship seeking to dock at Lebanon's southern ports



Figure 11. Palestinian fighters overlooking a strategic pass along the Lebanese-Israeli border.

[] must first receive permission from Israeli naval headquarters in Tel Aviv. []

Internal Difficulties

Internal Palestinian rivalries are a key stumblingblock to Arafat's effort to unify the Palestinians under his control. Whenever fighting between the Palestinians and the Lebanese Shia Amal subsides, Palestinian

* The Israelis consider Lebanon's southern waters as an extension of their security zone on the ground. Israel has total control over access to Lebanon's southernmost port of Tyre—in effect maintaining a naval blockade of Tyre and An Naqurah. The Israelis eventually allow most screened ships to enter port, but they deny access to some and often board suspicious vessels. Israeli patrols farther north off Sidon are conducted at less frequent intervals. []

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Figure 12. Hatem Kawash, a pro-Syrian Palestinian assassinated in Sidon in intra-Palestinian rivalries [redacted]



Figure 13. Rasim al-Ghul, commander of Force 17, assassinated in Sidon in intra-Palestinian rivalries last August [redacted]

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fighters and field commanders resume their hostilities against one another as part of a continuing power struggle to control the Palestinian camps in Lebanon.

[redacted]

Nowhere have these rivalries been more bitter and persistent than in Sidon. The rivalries occasionally have become extremely intense as pro-Syrian and pro-Arafat Palestinians have set out to liquidate one another:

- Arafat's newly appointed Force 17 commander in the Sidon area, Hassan Taybah, was killed by anti-Arafat Palestinians in March 1987 and replaced by Rasim al-Ghul. Force 17 is Fatah's intelligence and operations arm.
- A pro-Syrian Ba'th Party member, Hatem Kawash, was killed in June. Kawash was a Palestinian working for Syrian intelligence. Rasim al-Ghul was implicated by Damascus in the assassination.

- Ghul was killed on 22 August. [redacted]

[redacted]

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Despite the rivalries, the camps war generally forces the Palestinians to pool their resources against Syria and Amal. The US Embassy in Damascus reports that Syrian support for the Lebanese Shia Amal against the Palestinians is causing a major rift between the Assad regime and its allies within the

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Figure 14. Abu Ali Shahin, seriously injured in intra-Palestinian rivalries last August. [redacted]

Palestine National Salvation Front. The rift has already led to the defection of its major members, the PFLP and DFLP, to Arafat's side following the meeting of the Palestine National Council in Algiers in April 1987. [redacted]

Palestine National Salvation Front fighters are infiltrating from Syrian-controlled areas in the Bekaa to the Sidon area to escape Syrian control. [redacted]

Syria's Camps War Strategy

We judge that Syrian President Assad is determined to control the PLO and use it to advance Syrian interests. He appears confident that the prospects for complete PLO reunification under Arafat following the Palestine National Council meeting in Algiers are waning and probably believes that intra-Palestinian conflicts will block PLO reunification. Syria's domination of the remaining Damascus-based Palestinian groups will almost certainly prevent complete reunification. Its intimidation of those radicals who rejoined the PLO has made them tentative about submitting to Arafat's leadership. [redacted]

We believe the Syrian-sponsored camps war has hurt the PLO's ability to return to its pre-1982 level in Lebanon, and we expect the Palestinians will have to continue expending much blood and treasure to defend their outposts in the country. [redacted]

[redacted] PLO casualties have climbed to more than 2,500 since the beginning of hostilities between Amal and the Palestinians in 1985. The Palestinian camps in Beirut and Tyre remain besieged by Amal at Syria's behest. Destruction of the Shatila camp in Beirut has been extensive, with only 10 percent of the dwellings still standing. Amal and the Syrians are not allowing construction materials such as cement to be brought into the camp. [redacted]

Several Syrian- and Iranian-sponsored cease-fires have been initiated over the last two years, only to be broken within a few hours. Potentially the most important cease-fire agreement between the Palestinians and Amal—signed on 12 September 1987—lasted only a few hours. Syria for the first time agreed to allow Fatah into the talks leading to the cease-fire. According to the US Embassy in Beirut, none of the key substantive issues were raised in the agreement, let alone resolved. Amal's original demand that the Palestinians reduce their armed presence in the south and withdraw to the camps was not seriously addressed, nor was Palestinian insistence that Amal lift the nine-month siege of the camps in Beirut and Tyre to allow the PLO to rebuild the camps. [redacted]

We believe that Syria is determined to contain Arafat's activities and bring the Palestinian movement in Lebanon under its direct control. According to the US Embassy in Damascus, Syria views the abrogation of the Cairo agreement last May by the Lebanese parliament as a symbolic victory. The agreement, negotiated between the Lebanese Government and the PLO in 1969, sanctioned the PLO presence in Lebanon and the organization's right to attack Israel from Lebanon. Damascus coupled its opposition to the Cairo agreement with its opposition to the 1983 agreement between Lebanon and Israel, which Syria contended gave Israel a pretext to demand equal

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Figure 15. Palestinian fighters demonstrating against Syria and Amal in refugee camp in Sidon [redacted]



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treatment in Lebanon. Despite Christian support for the Syrian move against the PLO, deep opposition to Syria's overall strategy for Lebanon remains strong among most Lebanese Christian members of parliament. [redacted]

The cancellation of the Cairo agreement has reduced Damascus's influence with its Palestinian surrogates. The vote drew severe criticism from several Palestinian allies, including the PFLP and the Popular Struggle Front. The PFLP and the Popular Struggle Front say that the Lebanese parliament's decision was irrelevant and that all Palestinian fighters in Lebanon would disregard it. The leader of the Popular Struggle Front—a close Syrian ally—was particularly disturbed by the cancellation of the accord, saying that the Palestinians have the right to attack Israel from Lebanon. [redacted]

Syria appears determined to continue its support for Amal leader Nabih Barri, but there are deep and fundamental differences between Amal and Damascus regarding the management of the Palestinian problem in Lebanon. Barri's refusal to support the Palestine National Salvation Front almost certainly stems from his belief that the pro-Syrian Palestinians could gain strength at the expense of Amal. Barri undoubtedly reasons that the return of the Front—even at Damascus's behest—would be followed by a return of Arafat loyalists, which in the long run would strengthen the political and military strength of both. [redacted]

[redacted] several Amal commanders were unhappy with Damascus for preventing them from gaining the upper hand last spring in Sabra and Shatila, when Syrian forces took control of several Amal checkpoints around the camps. [redacted]

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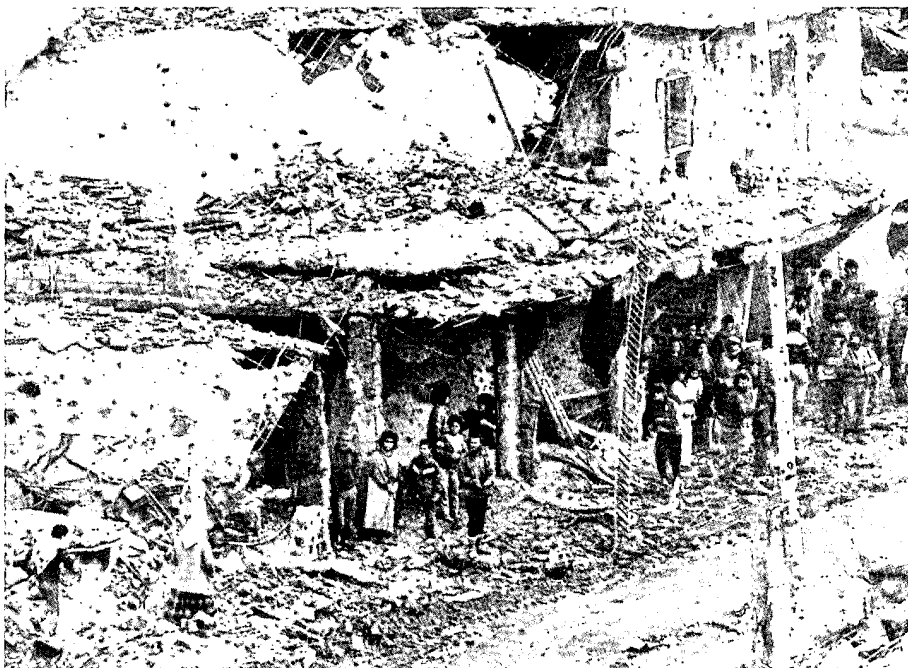
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Figure 16. Shatila before ...



and after



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Figure 17. Palestinian fighters operating in South Lebanon [redacted]

In addition, Barri apparently views the growing Sunni-Palestinian rapprochement as a threat to the Lebanese Shia movement. He believes that the growing military power of the PLO in Lebanon is likely to revive the Lebanese Sunni power base. [redacted]

We believe that the splintering of the Amal leadership and major Amal militia defections to Hizballah following the Syrian massacre of Hizballah fighters at Basta in West Beirut last February have weakened Amal. Several of Barri's former aides such as Hassan Hashem and Mustafa Dirani are openly siding with the Palestinians against both Amal and Syria. Hashem controls three villages adjacent to Maghdushah. [redacted]

Damascus has sought to rally other Lebanese groups to its anti-Fatah campaign, but with little success. It has engineered several anti-Arafat agreements, most notably the Damascus agreement in June 1986 and the establishment of the Unity and Liberation Front in July 1987—the latter involving 13 Lebanese and Palestinian groups. [redacted] deep animosities between the signatories make such “alliances” virtually meaningless, except as signs of Syria's inability to control its allies in Lebanon. The US Embassy in Beirut reports that all key signatories believe the Unity and Liberation Front will have no tangible success. [redacted]

Some of Syria's difficulties, in our view, stem from its attempt to juggle its Palestinian policy with its regional and international commitments to the Soviet Union, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Libya. The US Embassy in Damascus reports that Syria has had to respond to intercessions by these countries on the Palestinians' behalf. [redacted]

[redacted] the Syrian regime's insistence on a plan to break the siege of the camps in West Beirut last spring was due to increasing pressure, especially from the Soviet Union, to stop the camps war. Assad believed that he had to show tangible progress on resolving the problem of the Palestinians before going to Moscow for a scheduled state visit. The siege of the camps was lifted temporarily during Assad's visit to Moscow on 21 April, which also coincided with the Palestine National Council meeting in Algiers. [redacted]

We believe that the camps war has enhanced the influence and prestige of Iran and Hizballah at the expense of Syria and Amal. Tehran has negotiated several temporary cease-fires between Amal and the Palestinians since 1985 and has increasingly placed itself between Syria and the Palestinians. The US Embassy in Beirut reports that Hizballah appears to be the only winner in the camps war, since its long-term goal is to weaken both Syria and Amal in Lebanon. Iran's increasing involvement in the camps war stems from its need to ensure that the Amal-Palestinian fighting does not degenerate into a Palestinian-Shia confrontation, which could undermine its plan to strengthen the increasingly radicalized Shias in Lebanon. Some Hizballah fighters joined Amal in isolated skirmishes against the Palestinians around Maghdushah in fall 1986 but quickly withdrew under Iranian pressure. [redacted]

Syria's other ally, Libya, is also complicating Damascus's ability to win the camps war by proxy. Libya is a staunch PLO supporter and views the war as a Sunni-Shia confrontation. Libyan leader Qadhafi called on the Lebanese Sunnis and their Palestinian allies to rise against Barri's “Shia canton.” The call preceded [redacted]

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the assassination in December 1986 of Musbah Gharibi, a Libyan diplomat traveling in the Syrian-controlled Bekaa Valley, by Amal gunmen. [REDACTED]

Colonel Qadhafi is buying grassroots influence among several Palestinian groups, including the Palestine National Salvation Front. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Qadhafi is funneling funds to the Front through committees inside the camps in Lebanon.

[REDACTED] Qadhafi has recruited Palestinian fighters for his war with Chad. The US Embassy in Paris reports that 400 Palestinian fighters have arrived in Libya and have been sent south, probably to the Libyan base at Aozou. [REDACTED]

Outlook

We believe that, although the Palestinians are becoming better organized and more assertive in Lebanon, they will face increasing difficulties in expanding their stronghold. We expect Israeli countermeasures and Palestinian preoccupation with the camps war to frustrate PLO efforts to raise the strength of its fighters and its territorial control to the pre-1982 level. [REDACTED]

We believe that the brightest prospects for new PLO conquests are around Sidon, but the prospect for an expansion of Palestinian power there or elsewhere in the south will depend greatly on Syrian and Israeli actions. For different reasons, neither side wants the PLO to become dominant in the south, but each will resist any aggressive initiative by the other. A strong PLO presence could trigger an accidental clash between Syria and Israel. [REDACTED]

To control Arafat, Syria must continue to rely on Amal. Syria has so far put off a major movement of its troops southward to Sidon, primarily for fear of antagonizing Israel. If Syria decided to enter Sidon, it would have to draw down its forces in West Beirut—a move that would almost certainly jeopardize its security plan in the Lebanese capital. The lingering camps

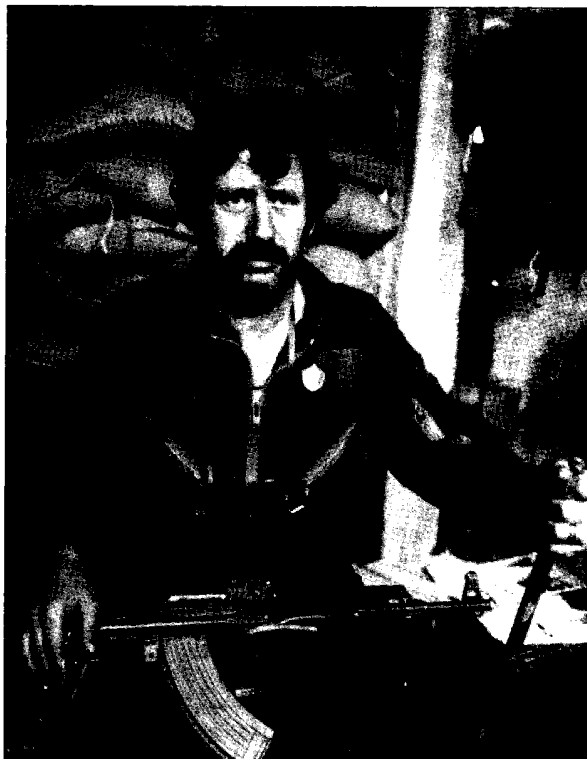


Figure 18. Palestinian fighter in a refugee camp in Beirut. [REDACTED]

war there, however, is chipping away at Amal's military and organizational strength. The weaker Amal becomes, the greater becomes the influence of the radical Hizballah among Lebanese Shias. [REDACTED]

We believe that Israel will continue to harass and punish the PLO, but it will not reoccupy Sidon or other major southern towns. Like Syria, it will continue to rely on a surrogate, the Army of South Lebanon, because of deep antipathy to a significant reinvolvement in Lebanon. Given Israel's strong aversion to casualties, it will be reluctant to return to large-scale engagement to halt the PLO's return. [REDACTED]

The prospects for a Palestinian resurgence in West Beirut are poor. Palestinian fighters there are surrounded by Syrian troops. Although Amal is fragmented and weak in West Beirut, we believe that

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Amal and Syria could gain the upper hand in the Sabra and Shatila camps should Damascus decide to storm them, although such a move would be costly for the Syrians because of Soviet, Saudi, Libyan, and Iranian support for the PLO. The largest and best armed Palestinian camp of Burj al Barajinah in West Beirut is unlikely to come under either Amal or Syrian control, since it is one of the main gates to Hizballah's most important stronghold in the southern suburbs. The storming of Burj al Barajinah by Syrian troops would undoubtedly lead to a tactical alliance between Hizballah and Palestinian defenders of the camp. Such a move probably would result in high Syrian casualties, a consideration that has prevented Damascus from embarking on this course. Syria's most attractive remaining option will be to continue the siege of the camps in West Beirut to keep the PLO's forces tied up in them. []

Alternative Scenario

In the event of a Syrian-PLO reconciliation—perhaps following Arafat's or Assad's death or because Assad decides to change course and embrace Arafat—the prospects for the PLO presence in Lebanon would improve dramatically. An Assad-Arafat rapprochement is unlikely to take place except under extreme conditions and would require major political concessions from both men. Assad would have to recognize Arafat as the major spokesman of the Palestinians, and Arafat would probably have to give pro-Syrian Palestinian surrogates a more meaningful say in running the day-to-day affairs of the PLO. []

The establishment of warmer relations between Assad and Arafat probably would bring the camps war to a halt. An end to the camps war would release PLO fighters to attack Israel, with Syria's blessing. Any PLO success in mending its relations with Damascus would give the PLO added military impetus. Arafat would gain extensively from the reopening of a weapons supply line through Syria. []

Implications for the United States

Lebanon has become the principal battlefield for the Palestinians in particular and the Arab-Israeli conflict in general. In the last decade most of the casualties produced by Arab and Israeli fighting have

occurred in Lebanon. More Syrians and Israelis died in their clashes in 1982-84 in Lebanon than on the Golan Heights in 1967, and more Palestinians have fought in Lebanon than in any other arena. No other Israeli border is as troubled as the Israeli-Lebanese border, and South Lebanon is the only "active" confrontation zone between Israel and its Arab neighbors. []

US efforts to mediate the Lebanese conflict and to promote movement toward peace in the Middle East are intimately bound up with the reemergence of an armed Palestinian presence in Lebanon. The resurrection of Palestinian influence in Lebanon adds to the country's thorny social and political problems and enhances the PLO's ability to be a wild card in Lebanese politics. The reintroduction of the Palestinian factor in Lebanon has contributed to the hardening of political attitudes among Lebanon's factions and has further complicated efforts at genuine political reform. Escalation of hostilities, especially in the south, runs the risk of triggering open conflict between Israel and Syria. []

The threat to US interests posed by terrorism spawned in Lebanon appears to be increasing. Effective Israeli—or Syrian—countermeasures against the Palestinian resurgence in Lebanon will increase PLO frustration, and we believe some Palestinian groups—particularly Fatah and Abu Nidal—would accelerate their cooperation with Hizballah and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard. We would expect this to lead to increased terrorism, both within Lebanon and internationally. []

We believe that cooperation between Hizballah and Abu Nidal would pose the greatest threat to Israeli and US interests. Abu Nidal has a well-developed support network in Western Europe that could be made available to Hizballah operatives. We believe that closer Abu Nidal ties to the Revolutionary Guard in South Lebanon would translate into coordinated operations against US targets both in Europe, where security is well maintained, and elsewhere in Asia and Africa, where security is generally lax. []

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Appendix A

The PLO in Lebanon

The emergence of the Palestinians as a political force in Lebanon occurred after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. The defeat of the Arab armies and the loss of significant territory to Israel paved the way for the rapid radicalization of the Palestinians and accelerated their cooperation with Lebanese nationalist and leftist groups, the original champions of the Palestinian cause in Lebanon. The leftist-Palestinian alliance grew under Druze leader Kamal Junblatt's tutelage and became a formidable opposition to Christian hegemony. Junblatt shielded the Palestinians from harassment by Lebanese internal security officials, and they gained substantial political autonomy inside Lebanon. []

The emergence of a Palestinian armed presence in Lebanon in 1968-69 was met by massive Israeli attacks on suspected Palestinian bases in South Lebanon. Israel's policy of harsh retaliation forced the migration of thousands of Lebanese Shia and Palestinian inhabitants northward toward Beirut. The influx of displaced and mainly unskilled migrants who settled in camps and poverty-ridden makeshift shantytowns on Beirut's outskirts added to the social and economic dislocations already present and reinforced demands for political and economic reform. []

The Lebanese Government's inability to respond rapidly to Palestinian and Shia demands for political and economic reform or to protect South Lebanon from increased Israeli attacks led to bloody clashes between government troops and the Palestinians in 1969. The clashes culminated in the signing of the Cairo agreement between the PLO and the Lebanese Government in November 1969. The agreement, which allowed the Palestinians to launch attacks against Israel's northern border and to protect the Palestinian camps, established the PLO as a state within a state, tipped the political balance in Lebanon in favor of the Muslims, and paved the way for the outbreak of civil war in 1975. PLO fighters and their Lebanese allies paraded in major towns and cities wearing military uniforms and carried arms in open defiance of the

Christian-dominated Lebanese Government. They stopped civilian and military vehicles at arbitrary checkpoints and harassed their occupants, a development that crystalized Christian fear of a takeover of their country by the Palestinians and Muslim Lebanese. []

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The Shia-Palestinian alliance was closest during the first two years of the Lebanese civil war. Shia Amal fighters joined forces with the Palestinians and Lebanese Muslim and leftist militias to fight bitter battles against the Christians. The honeymoon between Amal's founder, Musa al-Sadr, and the Palestinians began to sour, however, over Palestinian activities in South Lebanon, which were becoming increasingly burdensome on the Shia community there. A noted Middle Eastern scholar states that the financial and political deprivation of both the Palestinians and the Shias created a natural alliance between them at first. As the cycle of Palestinian incursions into Israel and Israel's reprisals into southern Lebanon brought greater suffering to Musa al-Sadr's Shia constituency, it became harder for him to sustain pro-Palestinian policies. Although the Shias sympathized with the Palestinians, they grew unwilling to tolerate Palestinian actions that exposed the Shia community to additional deprivation. []

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The rise of the Palestinians in Lebanon was aided by the arrival in 1970 of thousands of additional Palestinian fighters and refugees from Jordan following the defeat of the PLO by the Jordanian Army. After "Black September" in Jordan, Lebanon became the last haven for the displaced Palestinians confronting Israel, a factor that had a profound impact on the evolution of the Palestinian presence in Lebanon. The acquisition of heavy weapons from Syria—a Jordanian foe—bolstered Palestinian influence and added to the emergence of the PLO as the undisputed political and military force in the country during much of the 1970s. []

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Some Palestinians struggled—unsuccessfully—to avoid direct involvement in Lebanese affairs so long as the Government of Lebanon continued to abide by the Cairo agreement. Yasir Arafat was particularly busy building bridges to all Lebanese factions, including the Christians, despite the initial clashes with the Christian militia in the early phases of the civil war. He was upstaged by the more militant wing of the PLO led by George Habbash of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Ahmad Jabril of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command, and Nayif Hawatmah of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine. These leaders not only expressed solidarity with the Lebanese leftist and socialist groups—as did Arafat—but also eventually called for the overthrow of the Lebanese Government by force, a development that polarized the Palestinian movement and heightened Christian fears of Palestinian hegemony. []

The Syrian entry into Lebanon in 1976 on behalf of the Christians angered the Palestinians and their leftist Lebanese allies and drew them closer together. Syria and the Palestinians had their own agendas and capabilities to act independently in Lebanon, which resulted in several Syrian-Palestinian skirmishes between 1976 and 1982. The Palestinians and Syria drew closer together, however, in the wake of the Egyptian peace initiative to Israel in November 1977 and in the aftermath of the expulsion of Syrian troops from Lebanon's Christian areas in 1978. []

The increasing political fragility of the Lebanese Government aided the establishment of a "quasi-Palestinian state" after 1976. The refugee camps became armed fortresses complete with tanks and other heavy equipment, and the south came to be

dominated by Palestinian fighters. Palestinian infiltration and attacks against Israel increased dramatically between 1977 and 1982. In response, Tel Aviv embarked on a policy of harsh military reprisals to halt Palestinian strikes and provide stability for its northern border. Israeli policy was to hold the Lebanese Government and various Lebanese groups accountable for the PLO's military activities. []

Palestinian attacks on Israel reached a peak in March 1978 when guerrillas infiltrated by sea, hijacked a bus on the main coastal road, and killed 39 Israelis. A few days later Israeli troops crossed the border and engaged the Palestinians in heavy fighting. Israeli troops remained in Lebanon until June and withdrew only after the United Nations agreed to set up the UN Interim Forces in Lebanon (UNIFIL) to police and monitor Palestinian infiltration into Israel from Lebanon. []

The presence of UNIFIL did not deter Palestinian attacks on Israel after 1978. The Palestinians became more aggressive and better armed, and the frequency of attacks against Israel's northern settlements increased dramatically by the time Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982. Former Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon states that the major aim of the Israeli invasion was the destruction of the "PLO terror kingdom." Sharon says that the PLO was becoming a major threat to Israel's northern settlements, forcing the inhabitants to live in constant fear. For the Palestinians, the Israeli invasion was a watershed that weakened the PLO militarily and prepared the way for its expulsion in 1982 and 1983. []

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Appendix B

Major Treaties Governing the PLO Presence in Lebanon

The Cairo Agreement. This agreement was signed by PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat and Commander of the Lebanese Army Gen. Emile Bustany on 3 November 1969. The agreement granted the PLO the right to operate freely in the south and to protect Palestinian refugee camps throughout Lebanon. Major provisions included PLO rights to:

- Work, reside, and move freely in Lebanon.
- Set up local committees in the camps to look after the interests of the Palestinians who were living there, within the framework of Lebanese sovereignty.
- Establish a Palestinian armed presence in the camps to protect the camps against Israeli and local attacks.
- Carry out police and other civilian administrative duties inside the camps.
- Obtain right-of-way facilities to the camps and to the south.
- Travel safely to the border areas from various Lebanese localities.
- Set up a security and intelligence liaison with the Lebanese Army.

The agreement also called for the Lebanese Army to cease hostilities against the Palestinian armed presence throughout Lebanon and to provide the Palestinian guerrillas with medical, hygienic, and other supplies as deemed necessary to carry out their mission against Israel. The Lebanese Army was to release all Palestinian detainees and cease harassing Palestinians.

The Damascus Agreement. This agreement was signed on 18 June 1985 under Syrian auspices by several pro-Syrian Lebanese and Palestinian groups following several months of bitter fighting between Shia Amal militiamen and Palestinian fighters. The goal of the agreement was to cement Syria's hold on its allies in

Lebanon and to isolate Arafat by denying him a role in Palestinian activities there. The basic provisions called for:

- The Palestine National Salvation Front to be the legitimate Palestinian group in refugee camps. The PLO considers this provision to be most offensive since it is a direct challenge to the Cairo agreement, which recognizes the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people in Lebanon.
- Heavy weapons in the camps to be collected and stored under Syrian and Palestine National Salvation Front supervision.
- Fighting between Amal and Palestinian fighters to be halted immediately.

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The Unification and Liberation Front Accord. This front was established by Damascus on 22 July 1987 and included several Lebanese and Palestinian groups, among them traditional PLO supporters including Druze chieftain Walid Junblatt, Sunni militia leader Mustafa Sa'd, and Lebanese Communist Party leader George Hawi. The principal provisions of this accord stipulate that:

- Palestinian-Lebanese relations should be regulated on the basis of the Damascus agreement.
- The Palestine National Salvation Front is the dominant Palestinian force in Lebanon.
- Arafat should not be allowed to rebuild his power base in Lebanon.

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- Lebanon and Syria must maintain a special relationship, in which Damascus seeks to achieve integration between the two countries in security, defense, economic, social, and educational matters.

[redacted]

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The US Embassy in Beirut reports that the Unification and Liberation Front is little more than a Syrian-imposed "shotgun wedding" to force Amal leader Barri and Druze chieftain Junblatt into an alliance. Both sides fought bitter battles to control West Beirut last February. [redacted] the Unification and Liberation Front was primarily designed to resolve the Palestinian problem in Lebanon by scrapping the pre-1982 conditions that gave the PLO the leading role. [redacted]

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